workforce planning framework

description of workforce planning

Workforce Planning is about developing an understanding of the make-up of the current workforce, the environment in which it works and will work in the future, and necessary skills, capabilities and aptitudes that will be required to achieve business outcomes in an ever changing environment.

It provides managers with a framework for making informed staffing decisions in line with an organisation's mission, strategic plan and budgetary resources. Workforce planning is a means of integrating and giving meaning to many areas of human resource management that are often considered in isolation, such as attraction and retention, flexible work practices, succession planning, staff development, etc.

benefits of workforce planning

The process of planning allows an organisation to:

- understand the present in order to confront the future;
- stand back and provide an overview;
- ensure long term thinking is not clouded by short term focus;
- challenge assumptions/liberate thinking;
- make explicit decisions which would allow later challenge;
- integrate organisational decision making and actions;
- link HR plans to business/corporate plans so as to influence them;
- communicate plans relevant to the workforce in order to gain support;
- optimise use of resources/make them more flexible;
- acquire and grow skills which take time to develop;
- identify potential problems;
- reduce risks by minimising the chances of making bad decisions; and
- provide managers with a strategic basis for making human resource decisions.

(*Strategic People and Planning: an overview of workforce planning.* Public Sector Management Division, Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, Western Australia; 2000)

In reality, the choice is whether to be systematic in planning or to be swept along by events. Therefore, rather than leave it to chance, arguably it is better to develop a clear understanding of the present situation, consider key future issues and manage the interplay between the two (Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet WA,2000,2)

A Focus on People and Business...
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Workforce Planning Toolkit
Resource Document 2. Workforce Planning Framework   **July 2001**

Queensland Government
Department of
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workforce planning framework

a focus on people and business . . .

process	context		synergies		outcomes
What internal factors are influencing our workforce capability?	Identify the key internal factors that are driving the need to be pro-active in developing a workforce management plan. This information should be available from current agency documents and an evaluation of the current workforce plan.		Core business of the agency/ work unit Current agency documents ❧ *Corporate Plan / Operational Plan* ❧ *EEO Plan* ❧ *Budget*	❧ *Workforce Plan* ❧ *Diversity Plan*	
What external factors are influencing our workforce capability?	Identify the external factors that are influencing, and will, influence the agency's priorities, outcomes and workforce requirements. These might include: ❧ *Whole of Government initiatives* ❧ *Sociological changes* ❧ *Government changes* ❧ *Changing community expectations* ❧ *Global and national influences* ❧ *Economic changes* ❧ *Technological changes*		❧ *Government policy documents* ❧ *National government agendas* ❧ *Professional associations* ❧ *Change agendas in other agencies*	❧ *Government commitments* ❧ *Academic research* ❧ *Customer surveys and feedback*	
Where do we want to be?	It may be appropriate to do short-term planning, looking forward 1 – 3 years. It may be appropriate to do longer-term planning looking forward at least 3 – 5 years. In either case, develop a picture of what the world will look like, what effect this will have on the services the agency offers and how the agency or work unit might need to re-align itself in order to respond to the new environment. Scenario Planning is a very effective process to identify possible futures. Information on scenario planning can be gained by reading the relevant texts recommended in Resource Document 5 – *List of References* The questions that need to be asked are: ❧ *"What people, skills, attributes will we need and how will we need to utilise them in the future?".* ❧ *How can we ensure best practice in service delivery?*		Global, national and local information on: ❧ *Changes to technology* ❧ *Sociological issues* ❧ *Environmental issues* ❧ *Skill/occupational requirements*	❧ *Government issues* ❧ *Regional matters* ❧ *Employment matters* ❧ *Agency/regional consultation*	A clear picture of the nature of the future business of the agency/work unit, the profile of the workforce required to deliver future services and the most appropriate workforce practices to deliver future services.
Where are we now?	The questions that need to be asked are : ❧ *What are the services we currently deliver?* ❧ *What is our core business?* ❧ *What systems do we have in place to manage the service delivery and are they effective?* ❧ *What people, skills, attributes do we have and how do we utilise them?* ❧ *What trends and patterns are evident in the data collected?*		Detail on the current status of the agency/work unit, available from the following sources: ❧ *MOHRI data* ❧ *Statistical surveys* ❧ *Staff satisfaction surveys* ❧ *Agency/regional consultation*	❧ *Skills audit* ❧ *Trend data* ❧ *Client surveys*	A clear picture of the current nature of the business of the agency/work unit, a profile of the current workforce and current workforce practices.
What are the gaps?	The information gathered by researching the future needs of the agency/work unit and by identifying the current status of the agency/work unit should be analysed to map the "fit" between the needs of the future and the capability of the present. The questions that need to be asked are: ❧ *What are the skills we will need that we don't have now?* ❧ *What skills do we have now that we will no longer need?* ❧ *Are our people in the right places for the type and volume of work that will need to be done?* ❧ *Will we have the right workforce mix; eg age, gender, etc that will give us an appropriately diverse workforce.* ❧ *Do we need to alter our workforce practices in order to achieve the future we have identified?* ❧ *What other gaps can we identify?*				A clear understanding of the current capability of the workforce to deliver current services and the workforce capability and practices required to deliver future services.
What strategies should we use?	This section of the process incorporates the final recommendations on what changes need to occur to the agency/work unit's current workforce and workforce practices to meet its business planning requirements. Recommended strategies might include a variety of initiatives targeted for specific groups of employees or work requirements. Strategies should be set out as an action plan with nominated responsible officers and timeframes. The Question that should be asked is: ❧ *What strategies or actions could be put in place to address the identified gaps?*		❧ *Change management plan* ❧ *Attraction and retention strategies* ❧ *Rewards and recognition* ❧ *Succession planning* ❧ *Mentoring*	❧ *Organisational learning plans* ❧ *Flexible work practices* ❧ *Work and Family policy and practices* ❧ *Career planning and development*	A Workforce Management Plan which is consistent with the goals, objectives and outcomes of other plans such as the Corporate Plan.
How should we implement the strategies?	The strategies should be evaluated against other government and organisational imperatives to test the validity of their implementation. The questions that need to be asked are: ❧ *Is this possible?* ❧ *Does this strategy fit within budget requirements?* ❧ *Does this strategy sit comfortably with other organisational strategies and imperatives; such as government commitments, diversity strategies, etc.?*		Current government commitments Core business of the agency/ work unit Current agency documents: ❧ *Corporate Plan / Operational Plan* ❧ *EEO Plan* ❧ *Budget*	❧ *Workforce Plan* ❧ *Diversity Plan*	Renewed workplace culture. A Workforce Management Plan which is able to be implemented because it is consistent with the objectives and outcomes of other plans and government and agency priorities. Beginning of a new, better-informed workforce planning cycle.
How have we changed? What more could we do?	Continual monitoring of the effect of the strategies on workforce capability and business outcomes is essential. The external environment will continue to change and strategies will have to be evaluated for their continuing relevance to meet future needs. The workforce planning process should be evaluated before embarking on the next cycle of planning.		❧ *Strategic and Corporate Plan* ❧ *EEO Plan* ❧ *Training and Development Plan Budget*	❧ *Operational Plan* ❧ *Diversity Plan* ❧ *Attraction and retention practices*	

the synergies of planning

To ensure that policies and programs are not out of step with the overall strategic direction of the organisation, workforce planning must be integrated with other planning processes, such as strategic and corporate plans, business plans, budget plans, managing diversity plans and equal employment opportunity plans.

The main questions that influence all workforce planning activity and can only be answered at a strategic level include:

1. *What is our organisation's overall strategy/mission?*

2. *What are the key workforce segments critical to achieving the strategy/mission?*

3. *What behaviour/skill characteristics do we require in these workforce segments? And*

4. *What workforce practices and flexibilities are required to achieve the strategy/mission?*
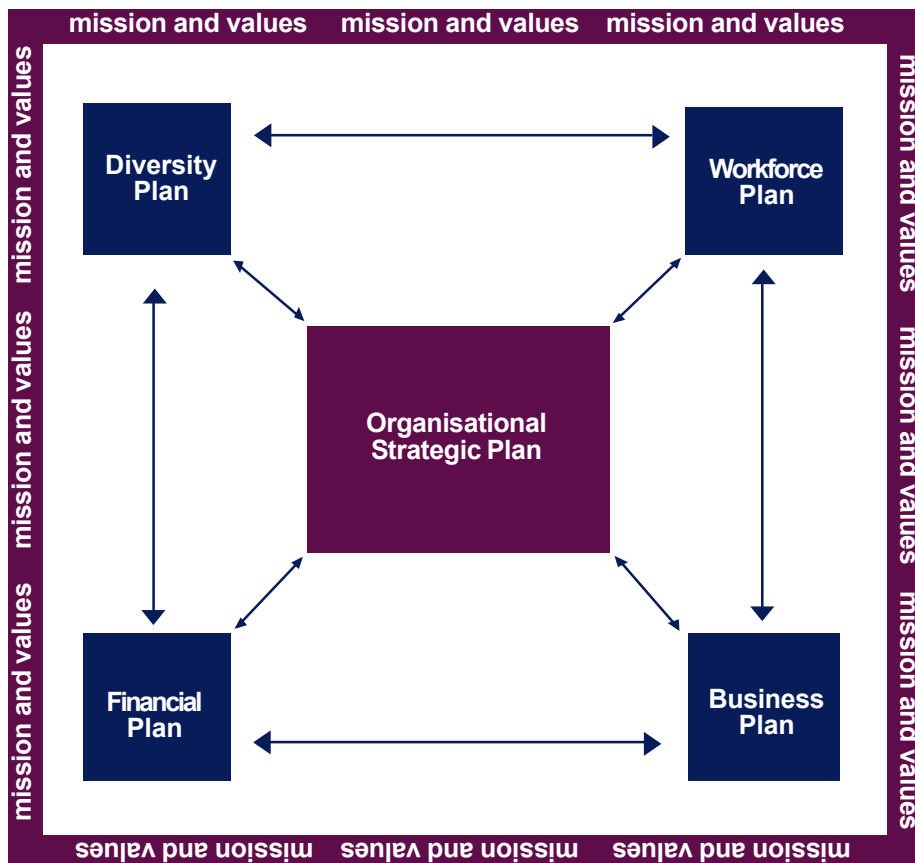
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